

## Message Text

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O R 061351Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8888

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 2072

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE, SY  
SUBJECT: LEBANON'S TRUCE AFTER SIX WEEKS: (SYRIAN) IRRESTIBLE FORCE  
MEETS (LEBANESE) IMMOVABLE OBJECT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 990(301350Z JAN 76), (B) BEIRUT 2068 (060810Z MAR 76)

1. SUMMARY: TRUCE IS STILL HOLDING REASONABLY WELL, BUT SYRIANS HAVE RUN INTO DIFFICULTY MOVING LEBANON TOWARD SETTLEMENT AND FRUSTRATION OF DAMASCUS IS EVIDENT. MAJOR UNSOLVED PROBLEMS ARE (A) FORMATION OF "CABINET OF NATIONAL BALANNCE", STALLED BY TRADITIONAL DRAWN-OUT BARGAINING PRECEDING VIRTUALLY EVERY LEBANESE GOVT, AND PARTICULARLY BY INTRAN- SIGENCE OF JUMBLATT AND CHAMOUN; (B) SECURITY, ESPECIALLY IN CAPITAL WHERE LOOTING HAS BEEN RAM- PANT AND WHERE NEW MEASURES ARE UNDERWAY USING ALL AVAILABLE FORCES UNDER ARMY UMBRELLA; (C) UNSOLFED CASES OF ARMY DESERTERS, ESPECIALLY THAT OF LT. KHATIB; (D) BILL TO PROLONG PARLIAMENT'S TERM, WHICH SEEMS LIKELY TO BE VOTED NEXT WEEK EXTENDING TERM FOR 26 MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SYRIAN-SPONSORED TRUCE CONTINUES TO HOLD. WE SEEL LITTLE PROSPECT OF A RETURN TO LARGE-SCALE  
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POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS LONG AS THE MILIATARY BALANCE STAYS IN FAVOR OF SYRIA AND ITS ARMED AGENTS ON THE SCENE, DESPITE CONTINUED SURREPTITIOUS ARMING BY THE FACTIONAL MILITIAS AND FLARE-UPS LIKE AKKAR INCIDENT (REF B). HOWEVER, THE SYRIANS HAVE RUN INTO CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY MOVING LEBANON TOWARD THE KIND OF SETTLEMENT THEY ENVISAGE, AND THE FRUSTRATION SHOWS AMONG THE DAMASCU MEDIATORS.

KHADDAM AND COMPNAY ARE CURRENTLY IN SYRIA SITTING OUT THE PROBLEM UNTIL LEBANESE LEADERSHIP MAKES ENOUGH PROGRESS TO WARRANT THEIR RETURN. THE MAJOR UNSOLVED PROBLEMS ARE TH FOLLOWING:

I. FORMATION OF "CABINET OF NATIONAL BALANCE"

3. LEBANESE POLITICIANS IN BOTH CAMPS ARE ACTING AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED IN THE LAST TNE MONTHS. FOREIGNERS UNACCUSTOMED TO THE DRAWN-OUT BARGAINING USUALLY PRECEDING A LEBANESE GOVT, INCLUDING THE SYRIANS, ARE AGHAST AT THE CANTANKEROUSNESS SHOWN PARTICULARLY BY JUMBLATT ON ONE SIDE AND CHAMOUN ON THE OTHER. FRANGIE AND KARAME ARE IN THE MIDDLE, THE FORMER FULFILLING HIS AGREED ROLE AS ARRANGER OF CHRISTIAN COMPLIANCE AND THE LATTER PLAYING HIS USUAL PATIENT GAME. IT IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT KARAME WILL HEAD WHATEVER CABINET EMERGES.

4. THE ONLY POINT AGREED UPON SO FAR IS THAT THE PRESENT CABINET SHOULD BE ENLARGED. THE NUMBER OF NEW MINISTERS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS IS STILL UP IN THE AIR. JUMBLATT, SPEAKING FOR THE LEFTIST GROUPS, HAS TAKEN SEVERAL DIFFERENT POSITIONS:

(A) THE CABINET SHOULD CONSIST OF 24 PERSONS. (AT ONE POINT HE SAID THE CABINET SHOULD INCLUDE THE "FIGHTERS" ON BOTH SIDES-I.E. YOUNGER MEN WHO FOUGHT, OR AT LEAST DIRECTLY LED THOSE WHO FOUGHT, ON THE BARRICADES. BUT HE MAY NOT BE PRESSING THIS DEMAND.)

(B) LEFTIST PARTIES SHOULD BE WELL REPRESENTED. (WE UNDERSTAND JUMBLATT HAS PRESENTED ABOUT A HALF DOZEN LEFTIST NAMES. REPORTS VARY, BUT THESE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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SAID TO RANGE FROM EXTREME LEFTISTS LIKE MUHSIN IBRAHIM, HEAD OF THE COMMUNIST ACTION ORGANIZATION, TO RELATIVE MODERATES LIKE NAJID QARANOU. JUMBLATT EXCLUDES HIMSELF, BUT REPS OF HIS PSP ARE REPORTEDLY ON THE LIST. GEORGE HAWI OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY IS OMITTED, AS IS NASSERITE IBRAHIM QULAYLAT. THERE ARE WIDELY CONFLCTING REPORTS WHETHER ASSEM KANSO OR ANYONE ELSE FROM PRO-SYRIAN BAATH IS INCLUDED.)

(C) THE CABINET SHOULD BE EXTRA-PALRIAMENTARY, I.E. NO DEPUTIES. (THIS DEMAND REINFORCES THE TWO ABOVE THAT "FIGHTERS" AND LEFTIST PARTY LEADERS BE INCLUDED.)

(D) IN ADDITION TO NEW CABINET, DIALOGUE COMMITTEE SHOUDLD BE REVIVED, PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS PARTS OF FRANGIE'S 17-POINT PROGRAM WHICH JUMBLATT BELIEVES

NEEDS "REVISION". (JUMBLATT RECENTLY TOLD CHARGE  
"FIGHTERS" MIGHT SIT ON THAT COMMITTEE. THIS SEEMS  
TO BE ALTERNATIVE TO FIGHTERS IN NEW GOVT.)

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5. PREDICTABLY, THE DEMAND FOR A TOTALLY EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CABINET HAS AROUSED THE IRE OF MANY DEPUTIES. IT IS PROBABLY A NON-STARTER. THE CALL FOR A RENEWED DIALOGUE COMMITTEE IS LIKEWISE FINDING LITTLE SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY FROM SYRIA. BUT THE REACTION OF CHAMOUN IS THE MAIN STUBLING BLOCK. HE HAS PUT FORWARD EQUALLY INTRANSIGENT COUNTER-DEMANDS:

(A) THE CABINET SHOULD CONSIST OF 12 PERSONS AND SHOULD INCLUDE ONLY KNOWN POLITICAL BIGWIGS--I.E. NO YOUNG "FIGHTERS" AND NO UPSTART LEFTISTS.

(B) SECURITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO AGREEMENT SHOULD PRECEDE THE FORMATION OF A CABINET. THE PRESENT CABINET (IN WHICH CHAMOUN HOLDS THE KEY POST OF INTERIOR) IS ENOUGH IN THE MEANTIME.

6. MOST LEBANESE OBSERVERS LOOK BEHIND THESE SEEMINGLY UNBRIDGEABLE POSITIONS CALMLY AND ARE CONVINCED THAT A CABINET WILL EMERGE OF AROUND 18 MINISTERS. SOME SEE BREAKTHROUGH WITHIN WEEK OR SO, WHILE OTHERS (WITH WHOM WE TEND TO AGREE) ENVISAGE LONGER DEALY. AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED TO ACCEPT SOME BUT NOT ALL OF JUMBLATT'S NAMES, THE MOST EXTREME LIKE IBRAHIM BEING EXCLUDED. THERE WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ANY "FIGHTERS," BUT A SPRINKLING

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OF NON-DEPUTIES IS LIKELY ON THE LEFT. AMIN GEMAYEL ON RIGHTIST SIDE MAY REPRESENT HIS FATHER TO BALANCE JUMBLATT'S SELF-EXCLUSION. RAYMOND EDDE WILL NOT SERVE. POSSIBLY ONLY KARAME WILL REPRESENT TRADITIONAL MOSLEMS, UNLESS SAEB SALAM OR ABDALLAH YAFI ARE BROUGHT IN AS MINISTERS OF STATE; AS FORMER PREMIERS, NEITHER WOULD ACCPE LESSER PORTFOLIO, AND SALAM AT LEAST SEEMS TO BE AVOIDING ANY PARTICIPATION.

7. ALL THIS REMAINS MAINLY CONJECTURE, HOWEVER, AS LEBANESE PLAY THROUGH THEIR TRADITIONAL CABINET-FORMING MINUET. MEANWHILE SYRIAN MEDIATORS, AFTER BEING BURNED, ARE IMPATIENTLY--BUT WISELY--STAYING OUT OF A GAME THEY DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND. CURRENT SPECULATION IS THAT KHADDAM MIGHT RETURN WITHIN WEEK, ONCE GAP BETWEEN CHAMOUN AND JUMBLATT GETS SMALL ENOUGH.

## II. SECURITY

8. CHAMOUN'S DEMAND THAT SECURITY BE FULLY EFFECTIVE BEFORE OTHER STEPS ARE TAKEN FINDS AN ECHO IN BEIRUT BUSINESS COMMUNITY, SUFFERING FROM WIDESPREAD LOOTING IN THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT. FREE-LANCE LAWLESSNESS OF THIS TYPE HAS BECOME THE CITY'S CHIEF SECURITY PROBLEM. THE SYRIANS ARE REPORTEDLY DETERMINED TO TAKE EFFECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES, BUT A MAJOR HANGUP HAS BEEN HOW TO PUT THE ACTION I A LEBANESE RATHER THAN SYRIAN OR PALESTINIAN CONTEXT TO AVOID CRITICISM. A STEP FORWARD WAS MADE MAR 2, WITH APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL HANNA SA'ID, LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AS CHAIRMAN OF TRIPARTITE HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE THAT HAS BEEN SUPERVISING CEASEFIRE. ALL ENFORCEMENT ARMS IN THE COUNTRY--ARMY, INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF), PLA, AND PASC--WILL THUS BE UNDER LEBANESE ARMY UMBRELLA.

9. IT HAS ALSO BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT NEW SECURITY MEASRUES ARE GOING INTO EFFECT STARTING MAR 5 IN BEIRUT, ALTHOUGH DISAGREEMENT IS REPORTED ON EXTENT OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION. LEBANESE ARMY AND  
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ISF ARE TAKING UP POSITIONS IN EXPANDED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT STRETCHING FROM HOTELS TO NATIONAL MUSEUM. ARMY AND ISF ARE ALSO SUPPOSED TO CONTROL EAST BEIRUT. PLA AND PASC WILL REINFORCE NOMINAL ARMY/ ISF CONTROL IN WEST BEIRUT. ALONG WITH THESE STEPS,

PRIVATE MILITIAS ARE SUPPOSED TO ABANDON EARLIER ROLE  
AS SURROGATE ENFORCES OF SECURITY IN CERTAIN AREAS.

10. THIS LAST STIPULATION IS NOT LIKELY TO BE  
IMPLEMENTED FULLY. DATT HAS IT FROM GOOD SOURCE THAT  
KATAEB IS DETERMINED TO HOD EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF  
ASHRAFIYEH, AND WE CAN PROBABLY EXPECT RESISTANCE  
FROM ALL MILITIA GROUPS OF LEFT OR RIGHT. MOREOVER,  
IMPACT OF NEAR-MUTINY AMONG CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS IN  
AKKAR INCIDENT IS INAUSPICIOUS SIGN JUST AS ARMY IS  
HANDED RESPONSIBLE ROLE. HOWEVER, MOST OBSERVERS  
EXPECT ABOVE ACTIONS WILL IMPROVE SECURITY. THESE  
STEPS ARE BEING BILLED AS START OF "SECOND PHASE" OF  
TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE'S TASK AIMED ULTIMATELY AT  
RESTORING AUTHORITY OF LEBANESE STATE.

### III. KHATIB CASE

11. DESERTERS STILL AT LARGE REMAIN BIGGEST THRON  
IN THE GOVT'S SIDE. AKKAR EVENTS INVOLVING FOLLOWERS  
OF RENEGADE MAJOR AHMAD AL-MAMARY SHOW DANGER INHERENT  
IN ACTIVITIES OF THESE REBELIOUS ELEMENTS. MOST  
CELEBRATED CASE IS THAT OF LT. AHMAD AL-KHATIB IN  
BEKAA VALLEY. ALTHOUGH HIS FOLLOWING IS SAID TO BE  
RELATIVELY SMALL NUMERICALLY, HE HAS GOTTEN A BIG  
PRESS LOCALLY. HIS OPPOSITION HAS BECOME VIRTUALLY  
SYMBOLIC OF ARMY'S PLIGHT. HIS MILITANT ESPOUSAL OF  
LEFTIST DEMANDS GIVES HIM FIRM SUPPORT OF JUMBLATT'S  
CAMP.

12. TWO MAIN IDEAS ARE RUMORED AS PROSPECTIVE SOLU-  
TIONS TO HIS CASE. SYRIANS REPORTEDLY TRIED TO CON-  
VINCE HIM TO GO TO SYRIA AND ACCPET "POLITICAL ASYLUM"  
THERE. HE EVIDENTLY REFUSED. ALTERNATIVE IS TO INDUCE  
HIM TO JOIN A PLO COMMANDO GROUP, AND THIS IS CUR-  
RENTLY THE LEADING PROPOSAL.

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13. MEANWHILE GOVT HAS EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR RETURN  
OF DESERTERS, OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN, UNDER  
GENERAL AMNESTY, BEYOND MAR 1. LENGTH OF EXTENSION  
INDEFINITE AS YET. KHATIB, HOWEVER, IS NOT LIKELY  
TO BENEFIT FROM AMNESTY EVEN IN UNLIKELY EVENT HE  
WOULD WISH TO, FOR TOO MANY FELLOW OFFICERS ARE  
ADAMANT AGAINST HIS RETURN WITHOUT PUNISHMENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 BEIRUT 2072

#### IV. PROLONGATION OF PARLIAMENT

14. BILL TO EXTEND PARLIAMENTARY TERM TAKING SLOW COURSE THROUGH PARLIAMENT. THERE WAS BRIEFLY SOME HEARTBURN AMONG LEGALISTS OVER PROVISION THAT WOULD CANCEL BY-ELECTIONS FOR VACATED SEATS DURING PERIOD OF PROLONGATION, BUT THIS PROVISION HAS BEEN STRUCK FROM BILL. OBJECTION WAS THAT IT VIOLATED ARTICLE 41 OF CONSTITUTION REQUIRING BY-ELECTIONS. ONLY PENDING CASE IS SEAT OF SABRI HAMADE VACATED SLIGHTLY OVER TWO MONTHS AGO UPON HIS DEATH. IT NOW APPEARS HIS SON MAJID HAMADE WILL TAKE SEAT THROUGH PRE-ARRANGEMENT. (HE WILL BE ONLY CANDIDATE AND THUS BE DECLARED WINNER BY DEFAULT.)

15. PROLONGATION BILL WILL BE BROUGHT TO VOTE IN PARLIAMENT MAR 9 AND IS EXPECTED TO PASS EASILY. PROLONGATION TERM NOW PUT AT 26 MONTHS, I.E. UNTIL JULY 1978.

16. EXPECTED ADVERSE REACTION TO PROLONGATION AMONG EXTREME LEFTISTS SO FAR HARDLY NOTICEABLE. ITS STATUS AS EX-OFFICIO PART OF SYRIAN-ARRANGED TRUCE HAS APPARENTLY DAMPENED CRITICISM. MODERATE  
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MOSLEMS HAVE ACCEPTED, LED BY KARAME. AS CURRENT MANDATE OF PARLIAMENT APPROACHES END IN EARLY MAY, HOWEVER, WE MAY SEE RENEWAL OF CHARGE THAT EXTENDED MANDATE SOMEHOW LESS "LEGAL" THAN REGULAR MANDATE. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT THIS SUMMER MAY ALSO BE

OCCASION FOR SUCH ALLEGATIONS.

17. COMMENT: SNAIL'S PACE AT WHICH SETTLEMENT BEING IMPLEMENTED IS PROBABLY UNAVOIDABLE GIVEN FRACTURED LEBANESE POLITICAL SCENE. BUT SLOW PROGRESS COULD SOMEDAY SPARK INCIDENT PROVOKING EXTREMISTS ON EITHER SIDE TO DROP ADHERENCE TO PROCESS. THIS IS LIKELY IF SYRIAN INFLUENCE RECEDES TOO QUICKLY THROUGH FRUSTRATIONS IN DAMASCUS. LEFTISTS PARTICULARLY ARE APT EXPLOIT SLOWNESS IN IMPLEMENTING ECONOMIC/SOCIAL REFORMS STILL IN PROMISE STAGE. SOME LEFTIST EXTREMISTS AND ANIT-SAIQA HARDLINERS AMONG PALESTINIANS MAY ACTIVELY SEEK AGGRAVATE SYRIAN FRUSTRATION TO PREVENT DAMASCUS DISCIPLINE FALLING ON THEM TOO HEAVILY.

18. YET SYRIAN ASTUTENESS IN THUS FAR AVOIDING HEAVY-HANDED INTERFERENCE MITIGATES SUCH DANGERS. KHADDAM'S FRUSTRATED WAIT IN DAMASCUS IS BENEFICIAL IN THIS RESPECT AT LEAST. IN GENERAL, LEBANESE GRUMBLING AGAINST SYRIAN "OCCUPATION" (REF A) IS MUCH REDUCED FROM FIRST DAYS OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION, ESPECIALLY ON PART OF MANY CHRISTIANS WHO NOW PARADOXICALLY SEE DAMASCUS AS THEIR SAVIOR AGAINST RISING LEFTISTS. NEVERTHELESS RESERVATIONS ABOUT SYRIANS REMAINING HERE INDEFINITELY ARE STILL WIDESPREAD ON BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT.  
LAMBRAKIS

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## Message Attributes

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